



The VMGA Report

The Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners

<https://vmga.net/wordpress/>

May/June 2023

Volume 28, Number 6

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We had a nice size group join us in Falls Church on April 8 for our Bimonthly VMGA board meeting. I want to thank the Fairfax Master Gardeners for hosting us and Leslie Paulson for coordinating the breakfast finger foods and the lunch. Everything was delicious. Thank you to all who traveled to join us and to Frank Riley for making the Zoom connection.

After our board meeting, we remembered our friend and fellow master gardener, George Graine who passed away August 18 2022. We recognized George with the "Friend of Master Gardener Award".

Please consider hosting our October or one of 2024 VMGA Bimonthly board meetings. It is great to see people in person from around the state and exchange ideas.

I am looking forward to Master Gardener College June 8 through 11 and hope to see many of you in person this year. EMGs participating in Tree Steward Training in 2023 will start Wednesday, June 7, at 9 AM and spend that day and the next in dedicated classes plus a field trip to the wonderful trees at Historic Smithfield on the Virginia Tech campus. Early registration for Master Gardener College ends May 17 and late registration ends May 31. Classes are offered on a first come first served basis, so make sure to register early to make sure that you get the classes you want. Switching schedules is not advised unless you trade spots with someone. All the classes with limited enrollment are filled by pre-registrations, and there will not be enough materials for unregistered attendees. Our VMGA Annual Meeting will be Friday, June 10, 4:30pm at Master Gardener College.

We really need to encourage more of our EMG Volunteers to join our state association to take advantage of what VMGA offers. Please consider talking this up as you host events and meetings locally. Imagine our membership roster growing to over 550 members with potential for even more. Direct your volunteers to our website <https://vmga.net/wordpress/vmga-membership-applicationrenewal-form/> or contact Tonya Harper at membership@vmga.net. Current VMGA members, be sure you renew your \$12 annual membership which will expire on May 31 or consider renewing as a Continuing Member for a one-time payment of \$120.

Thank You,

Georgi Hall
VMGA President – president@vmga.net

2023 VMGA BI-MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

VMGA Officers

President
Georgianna Hall
Loudoun County

Vice President
Nelda Purcell
Franklin County

Secretary
Deb Straw
Hill City MGA

Treasurer
Stacey Morgan-Smith
City of Suffolk

Past President
Leslie Paulson
Prince William County

VMGA Membership has its advantages:

- ◆ Unit Support
- ◆ Scholarships
- ◆ Newsletter
- ◆ Advanced Training
- ◆ Discount Event Fees
- ◆ Membership Directory
- ◆ Statewide Networking

From the Editor

Deadline for Jul/Aug issue:

June 26

We would love to feature your unit's announcements, events or articles in the next issue. Articles can be about a favorite plant, tree, project, book review, or other topic of interest. This will encourage involvement around the state, getting more involved.

Please send to:

VMGA Newsletter Editor
newsletter@vmga.net

June 10th
August 12th

October 9th - "Host Unit Needed! Bring VMGA members to your area for the bi-monthly meeting. Contact Nice President Nelda Purcell at vicepresident@vmga.net for more information.

December 9th

CALENDAR

May 15—Culinary Herbs, May 15, 2023, 7:00 pm Zoom - VIRGINIA BEACH MASTER GARDENERS PRESENT GARDENING TALKS: Join us on Monday, May 15, 2023, at 7 pm via ZOOM for a Gardening Talks presentation on: Culinary Herbs: Presented by Cyndi Wyskiewicz, VCE Agent, Portsmouth: Sweet or spicy, pungent or mild, herbs add distinctive flavor and aroma to our food. They can also be an easy addition to the garden, providing you with abundant harvests. Cyndi will talk about how to grow, harvest and use these versatile plants. Gardening Talks is presented via Zoom and is FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. No registration is required. Gardening Talks are one hour. Go to VBMG.org and click on the Zoom link! Check out upcoming Gardening Talks for 2023 as you explore our website!

June 7-11, 2023—Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech

June 18—22, 2023—International Master Gardener Conference 2023— IMGC2023

EMG Webinar Series 2023: The EMG monthly webinar series has returned! We look forward to bringing you a wide range of new and interesting topics. All webinars will be recorded and posted to our website (<https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/webinar-archive/>). Please plan to register for each webinar:

Friday, May 12 at 1:00 pm – Invasive Plant Management, Dr. Laurie Fox Dr. Laurie Fox will give a presentation on invasive plant management and answer questions on the topic. This presentation will be available as a MG resource after the webinar. [Register here](#)

July 20th webinar with VT School for Plant & Environmental Sciences professor, Dr. Josh Kardos. Topic and registration link coming soon.

August 18th at 10am webinar with Lori Chamberlin, the Forest Health Manager for the Virginia Department of Forestry. This Virginia forest health update will cover the most common pests and diseases in Virginia's forests. This presentation will teach participants how to identify forest health disturbance agents, and how to prevent damage. Registration link coming soon.

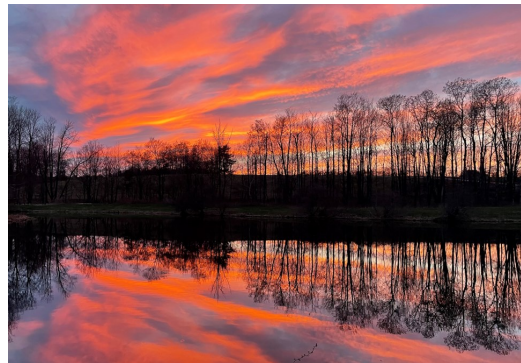


Photo by: Kelly Ristedt

NEWS AND NOTES FROM VCE LIAISON

Kathleen Reed, EMG Program State Coordinator

For updates, be sure to check out the Bi-weekly Update at <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/biweekly-update/>

NEWSWORTHY NOTES FROM NOTABLE NEWSLETTERS

The VMGA Report is always looking for submissions from EMGs, Unit Representatives, VMGA Committee Chairs, VCE Agents, and VCE Program Associates. The next deadline for the VMGA Newsletter is **June 26**. What can you submit? All the news that's fit to print! Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Training recaps. Tell us your takeaways!
- Highlights of your successes in programming, lessons learned, photos of volunteers in action
- Upcoming events offered by your unit
- Book reviews
- Plant or garden spotlights.
- Photos of your plants
- Recipes using produce from your garden or a farmer's market
- Garden-related poems and other creative writing

Be sure to include your name and unit name. Submit your content by email to newsletter@vmga.net.

Extension Master Gardener College Tips: Getting Around Campus & What to See in the Area

by: *Stacey Morgan Smith is the VMGA Treasurer and a Suffolk EMG*

It's almost time! Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener College (EMGC 2023) is June 7th - 11th on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg. We've previously given general advice about attending, as well as specific tips about what to bring if you stay on campus, all of which you can see at <https://bit.ly/emgc-advice>.

While keynote and breakout sessions will keep you busy, there's time before or after to enjoy a taste of life in Southwest Virginia. Virginia Tech opened over 150 years ago, and when I was a student in the early 90s, there was a rumor that one in 10 Virginians was a Hokie. True or not, Blacksburg is home to a beautiful 2,600-acre campus that millions of alumni call home, and for a few days in June, it will be home for all of us! Whether you stay on campus or off, get out and enjoy some of what makes this area special.

On Virginia Tech's Campus

[Virginia Tech Walking Trails](#) - See campus on one of VT's many walking trails or routes.

[Tour Virginia Tech](#) - Get the app and find a self-guided tour around campus. (I haven't tested this yet but look forward to trying it out this year!)

[Bike Parking](#) - Virginia Tech is perfect for biking! This link provides more info and includes a map of bike racks on campus.

[Virginia Tech Golf Course](#) - Get your walking in (or grab a cart) at the course right on Duck Pond Drive.

[Duck Pond](#) - Learn a little more about this beautiful spot before you visit it in person.

[Moss Arts Center](#) - See the "I'll be your mirror" exhibit, at the the intersection of Main Street and Alumni Mall. Watch their site for performances or other opportunities during your visit.

[Hahn Horticulture Garden](#) - Don't miss the amazing six acres of gardens just across the road from Litton-Reaves Hall. Both a display and teaching garden, you'll see something new and inspiring with every visit! (Pictured, including attendees from Northern Shenandoah Valley in 2022.)

[Stadium woods](#) - Over 250 large trees, including some white oaks over 300 years old, this 11.3 acres is a rare old-growth urban forest, right near Lane Stadium. (You can join an EMGC tour of the woods Thursday afternoon if you sign up during registration.)



Off Campus

[Ten locations to savor fresh air in the New River Valley](#) - See some of the off-campus outdoor recreation areas you could visit, including trails, scenic views, and the beautiful Cascades waterfall (pictured, 2017, is Morgan and Hannah Sutphin enjoying the water, by VCE Agent Mark Sutphin)

[Friday Night Jamboree](#) - Come enjoy music and a Friday evening in Floyd! There's usually at least a couple cars of EMGs headed that way, so you should be able to find company.

[Blacksburg Farmers Market](#) - Take a little walk (or drive) downtown Saturday morning or at lunch and head home with fresh veggies, plants, or artists' works.

[Shop Blacksburg](#) - Walk downtown and shop local! Blacksburg is home to a variety of shops and restaurants.

Transportation

[Parking](#) - When you arrive on campus, whether for one day or a few, you'll park in the back half of the lot behind Litton-Reaves Hall. You can use a mapping program ([Google Maps](#), GPS, etc.) with the address of Lot 8, Duck Pond Dr, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

[Around Campus](#) - Litton-Reaves, New Hall West, and D2 (for dining), are all just a few minutes of walking or biking. You can choose paths with steps or ramps. The internal construction at Dietrick Hall, which houses D2, is wrapping up, and the external construction should finish up late spring.

[To/from EMGC workshops/classes](#) - there are limited shuttles to help you get around during the day. Look for signage or ask for help.

[To EMGC off-campus tours](#) - Vans will transport you to and from these tours.



We look forward to seeing you at EMGC! VMGA holds its annual meeting Saturday afternoon at 4:30. Please join us! Come learn about additional opportunities for you to serve the EMG Program across the state and celebrate our Scholarship recipients.

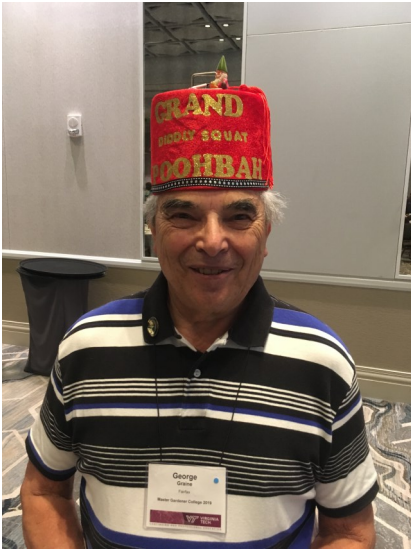
Just a reminder – please take pictures! Share them with your unit to encourage others to join you in the future. Please send up to 5 favorite EMGC photos to VMGATreasurer@VMGA.net, and we can use them in future articles! We'd also love to hear what you enjoyed most during your visit.

Still to come:

Photos and Stories from EMGC 2023 (July/August Newsletter)

Please send me your tips now or in the future to improve this information. If you've stayed on campus and have tips and advice to share, including the things you MUST bring with you, please share them at <https://bit.ly/EMGCtips>. If you have any questions about attending EMGC, send me an email at VMGATreasurer@vmga.net, and I can get the answers for you and add them to future articles.

George Graine was honored as a “Friend of Virginia Master Gardeners”



At a special ceremony, after VMGA’s April 8th, Bimonthly Board Meeting, we honored our friend and fellow Master Gardener, George Graine by recognizing him as a Friend of Master Gardeners. George’s wife, Gwen, daughter, Robin, son, Stephen and four of his grandchildren joined us for the ceremony.

George passed away on August 18th, 2022 after a brief illness. George was a friend to Master Gardeners since becoming a Master Gardener in 1987. He was a knowledgeable and experienced gardener and an incredibly talented and clever writer, but he was very modest about his skills and seemed to shy away from too much recognition.

He was a character in and out of the garden...so full of gardening knowledge to share.

He gave VMGA hours of his time over his tenure as a Master Gardener. He was Chairman of the Scholarship Committee for several years and livened up meetings with his humor.

George was active in Fairfax County EMG unit for 35 years. He was VMGA unit representative for more than 20 years. In the Fall of 2020, George received his 14,000-hour volunteer award.

George had a great sense of humor, was a walking 'botanical encyclopedia' and was active in the Fairfax County EMG Unit training committee. George had a list of recommended speakers two pages long ready to share. George knew a lot of people in the horticulture industry: authors, plant breeders and specialists, arborists etc., and he would help recruit speakers to come to Fairfax and teach classes. He was known by his 'pen name' *The Graine Thumb*, and he would often write about new landscape topics, books he read, and was a regular contributor to the FCMGA, VMGA and his neighborhood Holmes Run Acres HOA newsletters.

During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, George realized the difficulty EMGs may have in receiving continuing education. He worked with the state office to put together a list of research-based books that volunteers could read to help them complete their continuing education requirements.

George faithfully attended Master Gardener College each year and was very encouraging and supportive of others attending. He loved to see his colleagues from around the State in Blacksburg to network and share ideas. He would always pause and chat even with a newbie!!!

He was on the Master Gardener Advisory Board for 15 years and was a fixture at MG College. He approached Proven Winners for donations of plants for Master Gardener College attendees and even found sources for bags or boxes for carrying plants home.

He always wore bright clothes and was teased about his stripes and plaids. He once spoke at Master Gardener College and his Introducer noted that he was famous for "dressing like a parrot!"

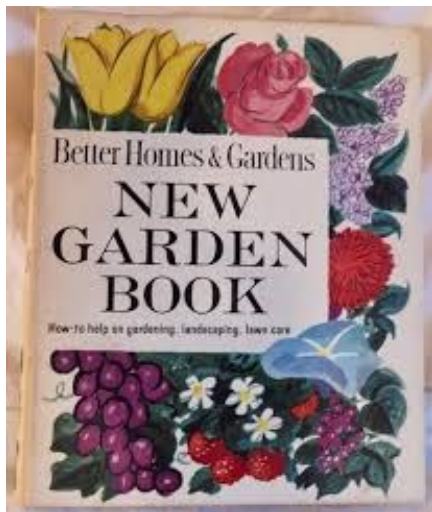
George was everyone’s friend. He was interested in your life and shared his as well.



Gardening 60 Years Ago--A Look Back

by: Betty Hedges, Loudoun County Extension Master Gardener

I inherited my mother's gardening books, and I thought I would look at them for some tried and true garden advice. *Better Homes and Gardens New Garden Book* was a very popular resource with lots of color photographs and sections separated by tabs. The 1961 edition is all about making your garden pretty with colorful annuals, adding plants for privacy, and hiding the foundation of your house.



There is a section on pests and diseases. You can blast your plants with chemicals: “Here’s help in knowing which one of the **wonder-working chemicals** to choose in ridding your garden of diseases and pests.” It lists chlordane, dieldrin, lindane, and malathion as some pesticides to use. All of these are now banned or severely regulated due to their toxicity. If your soil has nematodes, it says, use a fumigant such as ethylene dibromide to eliminate weed seeds, fungi, and soil insects. In other words, kill everything in the soil before you start planting (page 385). DDT was recommended to kill hornworms, rose slugs, may beetles, and flea beetles (page 391). Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* showing the dangers of insecticides to bird life in 1962, but it was not until 1972 that DDT was banned in the United States.

Where did all the invasive plants come from that we are finding in parks and wild places and that are so difficult to remove? The experts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state extension services included them in their publications. For example, the Maryland Extension Service booklet “Ground Cover Plants” (1968 edition) recommended bugle weed

with the note that it “may crowd out other plants,” goutweed “spreads rapidly once established,” kudzu vine “keep away from trees or shrubs, as it will climb into them and cover tops,” and creeping buttercup “may become a lawn weed.” These recommendations then are disseminated in popular books. The Better Homes & Gardens list of vines included Chinese wisteria, English ivy, wintercreeper, and kudzu (pages 152-154). Recommended groundcovers included pachysandra, periwinkle, ajuga, lily of the valley, and English ivy (pages 74-76). These plants spread quickly by runners, roots, or seeds and crowd out native plants. There is very little mention of native plants or their benefits. Some states have started to ban the sale of some invasive plants, but these states have received a lot of pushback from nursery growers and retailers.

Gardeners have a responsibility to be caretakers of the environment by creating gardens hospitable to wildlife and by avoiding plants and gardening practices that harm the environment. You can have a beautiful garden in harmony with nature! Gardening is both an art and a science, but it must be based on knowledge gained through scientific observation and experimentation. The essence of all science is that it is continually evolving as new discoveries are made. You would not want your doctor to use only medical techniques from 50 years ago, and you should not use gardening reference material from that time either.

If you want to keep old garden books, test all the advice in them against our current knowledge. Better yet, discard them and use modern reference materials from trustworthy sources, whether in books or online. Keep in mind that what we take as best practices today may be found to be ineffective or harmful in the future, so we should always be open to new discoveries in the wonderful science and art of growing and caring for the plants in our world.

More Room to Bloom

Said the violet to the dandelion,
"I'm prettier than you are."
Said the dandelion to the violet,
"But I'm stronger'n you by far."
"Well, prettier is better," said the violet with a sniff.
"I'd rather be the way I am," said the 'lion in a tiff.



Just then the violet trembled in a breeze that made her sneeze.
The 'lion smiled sardonically. She could see that he was pleased.
"You see my point, I'm sure," he said,
"If any little breeze can make you sneeze."
"I'm allergic to your dander. So please just go away."
"You know I have no legs to run. You see that I must stay."



But my dander's flying on the wind. In only one more day,
I'll multiply and crowd you out. So you had better pray!"
"I think there's room for both of us." Violet flashed a nervous
grin.
"As long as we stick together and don't let the onions in."
The 'lion lowered a shaggy brow, in an awful frown.
"Those onions are my buddies. I would never let them down."

The violet wrinkled her tiny nose, and began to brood.
"Drat it all." She shrugged, then sighed. "There goes the
neighborhood."
A tulip heard the sobbing, turned her head to find the cause.
"You mustn't cry, dear Violet. That 'lion has no claws."



"And here's the gardener coming now. I'll bet she'll set things right.
Whoever heard of a garden with only dandelions in sight?"
The violet heard the screen door slam, a snip, a clunk, a bump.
A pair of boots, a pair of hands, so big they made her jump.

"Ho ho, you rascals, back again? Well, you shall pay your way.
Your leaves will make a salad for my lunch at noon today.
For zest I'll add some onions. Me oh my, won't that taste good!
Then there'll be more room for violets blooming in the neighborhood!"

Jo Anne Gild